

Earthly Stories

with

Heavenly Meanings

J. W. BOTHEM



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Earthly Stories

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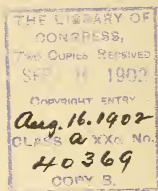
Heavenly Meanings

BY J. W. BOTHEM,
Traveling Salesman.

With Introduction by
REV. D. M. STEARNS.

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INTRODUCTION.

How manifestly true it is that the things of God are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. The writer of these telling illustrations, with whom I have from time to time had fellowship on the train while journeying to and from my Bible Classes, and whom I have known as "Isaiah liv: 11," since he first told me the story of his conversion, would love to be known as one of God's little ones, who believe His every word. He has told me some of the incidents herein related, and I have used them many a time and seen the blessing of God upon them.

We know how the Holy Spirit, through the prophets and through our Lord Jesus Christ, has drawn upon nature to illustrate the truths He would impress upon us: trees and plants are used to represent people, and our Lord speaks of Himself as a door, and a vine, and a green tree, Judges ix: 7-15; Psalm

i: 3; Isaiah lxi: 3; Matt. xv: 13; John x: 7, 9; xv: 1; Luke xxiii: 31. He reproved Israel by saying, "The ox knoweth its owner and the ass its master's crib, but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider." "Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the Lord." "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not," Isaiah i: 3; Jer. viii: 7; Matt. xxiii: 37. The first great redemption lesson in Scripture is seen in the coats of skins provided by the shedding of blood of innocent animals, which typified the Lamb of God, by whose blood alone sin can be taken away, and by whose sacrifice the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness are provided, Genesis iii: 21; Isaiah lxi: 10. The future glory of the redeemed is set forth in the cherubim placed in the garden of Eden after man's expulsion

therefrom, Genesis iii: 24; Ezekiel x: 20; Rev. v: 9, 10.

Happy are those who, like the author of this book, have anointed eyes and ears to see God and hear Him everywhere, at all times, and in all things.

D. M. STEARNS.

Germantown, Phila., Pa.,

May 8th, 1901.

THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE.

I am known in some places by the name of "Isaiah liv: 11." This is how it came about. When a lad of fourteen, I gave my heart to God, and was baptized in an old mill pond one second of December. For about fourteen or fifteen years, I was active in church work, became superintendent of a Sunday school, etc. At the age of twenty-eight, I received a business promotion which largely increased my income, and, like multitudes of others, in the day of prosperity I forgot God. About ten years after I had no position, was far away from God, and sin had made sad havoc with my life.

One day, going down John Street, New York, where they hold a business men's noon day prayer meeting, I stopped in to get rested. The voice of God spoke to me and made me so miserable, on account of my sinning, that I made a resolve never to go to the place again, nor to any other religious meeting.

The next day I found myself there again, made the same resolution, only to break it three days after. How wretched I felt that day in that meeting! I went across the ferry to my home in Jersey City, or to a place I called "home"—no wife or children there. I climbed two pairs of stairs and entered the room under conviction of sin; lonely, miserable, hopeless. On a stand in one of the rooms lay a large family Bible. I opened it, let it fall open where it would, and there I saw first of all these words, Isaiah liv: 11, "O, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted," and I said, "Well, that just describes me; I wonder what follows?" and I read, "Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."

God knew my language. Some are fond of flowers—I like them, but not passionately. The same is true of paintings. But I have an intense liking

for beautiful stones. I go to the Museum of Natural History in New York and spend hours in the room set apart for beautiful and precious stones. God knew this, and let me open to these precious words, that so appealed to me. I felt a hope springing up in my heart, and kneeling down by an old lounge, I commenced to tell Him how afflicted and tossed with tempest I was; when, like the prodigal's father, He took me up in His arms and kissed away the guilt, drove away the gloom, and sent me out to build a brighter home than I had ever known before. Surely He has made my "windows of agates and gates of carbuncles."

Right here I feel like adding that one day I was reading the new version of Isaiah, and turned to my favorite verses, to see if they had been changed. To my delight, I read, instead of "windows of agates," "I will make thy *pinnacles of rubies*." How I shouted! And He is keeping that word to me, too. Hallelujah!

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THE CHESS PLAYER.

Years ago Paul Morphy was the champion chess player of the world. A friend of his one day invited him to come and look at a valuable painting he had just purchased. It was called, "The Chess Player," and represented Satan playing chess with a young man, the stake being the man's soul. The game had reached the stage where it was the young man's move; but he was check-mated. There was no move he could make that would not mean defeat for him, and the strong feature of the picture was the look of awful despair that was on the man's face as he realized his soul was lost, and the grin that was on Satan's face as he saw his victory.

Morphy studied the picture for a time (he knew more about chess than the artist who painted the picture), and then called for a chess board and men. Placing them in exactly the same position as they were in the painting, he said, "I'll take the young man's place and make the move," and he made the move that would have set the young man free.

When I heard this story, I thought it was just like my life. In the game of life I was worsted. It was my move, but death was in every direction. I was in despair, when I saw One come on the scene who knew all about my life, and I recognized the only One who could help. I turned the game over to him, He made the move that set me free.

"He came to preach deliverance to the captives," and to save them "who sit in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron."

OLD PAINTING RESTORED.

My employer said to me one day, "What a lucky fellow that L—— is. He recently saw a picture covered with cobwebs and dirt, which he bought for a mere trifle. It did not appear to have any value. When cleaned, it proved to be the work of a master and of great value, so that he was immediately after offered a large sum for it."

I thought of the time I was in the devil's second hand shop; I cannot understand what God ever saw in me that was of value, but He bought me, not at a low figure—the price was His own Son. He has put me in the hands of an expert cleaner, and I expect to hang in the gallery of heaven one of these days, a wonder for adoring angels.

"He brought me out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock."

"He hath put a new song in my mouth."

As some one has uniquely put it, "He took me out of the mire and put me in the choir."

A HUT ON THE OHIO RIVER.

Sailing on the Ohio River from Louisville to Cincinnati one summer day years ago, I noticed on the banks a lot of huts, each chained to a tree fifteen or twenty feet up the bank. I said to one of the deck hands, "Why do these men have their huts chained to the trees?" He replied, "You know that while the river is very low just now, in the spring it sometimes overflows its banks, because of the freshets, and if the huts were not chained fast to the trees, they would float off down the river and be lost." I looked and saw that the bank rose fifty to one hundred feet above where the huts stood, and I wondered why they did not build further up. They seemed to be "squatters," and they might as well build higher—it certainly can't be pleasant to live out on the muddy waters of the Ohio River for weeks, waiting for the floods to subside. And then I wondered why Christians built so near the river of sin that

every wave of temptation swept them out on the filthy tide.

I was using this illustration in a meeting once, and at its close a man came to me and said, "I'll tell you why those men build so low. I used to live in that section. You know, when the freshets come that wash their huts out on the river, they also bring down the river from the farms above farming utensils, chicken coops, with chickens in them, etc. These men stand at the door of their huts with long rakes and rake in these coops and sell the chickens, and thus tide them over the hard times." And I said, I wonder if Christians build low because they know a dance or a theatre party will float down once in a while, and if they were higher up the bank they could not take these things in?

"If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above," Col. iii: 1.

ONE ROOM RESERVED.

At one time in my life, I hired a house from a man who up to the time I rented it had lived there alone. I moved my furniture in, supposing, of course, he would let me occupy the entire house. After my furniture had been moved in, I found that he had reserved for himself one small room. I objected to this, and after some discussion, told him that unless he moved out, I would. He refused to go, so I moved out.

For years after my conversion, I had one room in my life the key of which I had not given up to the Holy Spirit. I wanted that room and held it for months after He had urged me to move out. How I fought to keep possession, but one blessed night I gave Him the key, and since that time He has had full possession from cellar to attic. How I have wished I had yielded sooner.

"To obey is better than sacrifice," 1 Samuel xv: 22.

"I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii: 20.

LIVING ON SCRAPS.

When a boy, I clerked in a grocery store in a country town. One of my customers was an old man whom they told me was worth \$100,000, and had no one in the world to care for but himself, and yet he'd buy scrapings from the butter tubs at ten cents a pound, when butter was thirty cents a pound. One day he came in and said, "It cost me \$1.55 to live last week, and I can't afford to spend more than \$1.50; haven't you got some scrapings you can sell for eight cents?" And I scraped him up two and a half pounds, putting in a little more of the wood.

I used to think he was very foolish, and that if I was worth as much as he was, I'd spend more than \$1.50 a week. For years I lived on less than \$1.50 per week spiritually! But I have found that my Father is rich, and I have been drawing largely ever since.

"His allowance was a continual allowance, given him of the king," 2 Kings xxv: 30.

“JESUS; KEEP ME GOOD.”

One night, when my youngest daughter was about four years old, her mother, in kissing her good-night, said to her, “Darling, if you are so naughty to-morrow as you have been to-day, I will have to put you to bed without a good-night kiss.” If she had been threatened with what is usually considered severe punishment, she could not, I think, have felt worse, for she was a very affectionate child, and valued highly the kiss with which she was always put to bed. In the morning, when the two sisters had finished dressing, she asked them if they would not leave her alone. They did, but curious to know the reason she had made this unusual request, looked through the crack of the partially closed door, and saw her on her knees, and heard her pray, “Jesus, make me a good girl to-day. I want mamma to kiss me good-night.” Jesus kept her good and she had mamma’s good-night kiss.

That's the secret of all good living—the child-like prayer, "Jesus, keep me good." Let us pray that constantly, and we will have the Father's good-night kiss. Yes! have it all the while.

"We have no might against this great company, but our eyes are upon Thee," 2 Chron. xx: 12.

LIVING ON CRUMBS.

One very stormy day in winter, I decided it would be useless to try to sell any goods, as no one would care to look at samples on such a day, and so I stayed at home.

Looking out of the back windows, I saw a lot of sparrows trying to get something to eat. They were having a hard time of it, the snow having covered up their natural source of supply. Going out into the yard, I swept off a part of the fence and spread some crumbs, which the birds came and greedily ate. I went out again and again with the crumbs, and the sparrows increased in number, until sixty or seventy sparrows were gathered. I said, I'll do the handsome thing with these birds; so I went into the house, took a loaf of bread, cut it in halves, and going out, I placed one-half on a picket, and the other half on another picket ten feet away.

Taking my place by the window, I said to myself, "Now they will have a feast."

But they didn't. They seemed to think so large a supply was something in the nature of a trap. They stood perched on clothes line and wood shed, and looked at the loaves as if they were afraid of them.

In about five minutes one little fellow lighted in the centre of one of the pieces and ate his fill. I watched about twenty minutes, and saw only about five or six sparrows get anything to eat after I had put on the larger supply.

I have seen Christians who reminded me of these sparrows. They seem to eat the crumbs greedily and to be satisfied with a low order of living. They listen eagerly to teachers who only tell of a partial salvation, and seem afraid to grasp the larger truths of the Gospel, shrinking as if they were the loaves God has provided in His Word.

"He giveth meat in abundance," Job xxxvi: 31.

THE COSTLIER WATCH.

We get what we believe for. When my oldest daughter was in her last term at the grammar school, I said to her, "If you graduate with highest honors, and read the Valedictory at the closing exercises at the school, I'll give you a watch." After a little time we received word from the principal that she had been appointed Valedictorian. I was not getting a large salary, and I had in my mind an inexpensive chatelaine watch, such as some of her friends carried; but one day I overheard her telling some of her school friends that "papa is going to give me a watch like Aunt Lizzie's." I knew that was an expensive timepiece, but immediately I said, "I'll get her a watch like her aunt's if I have to go without my lunch for a time to make up the difference."

Trust God, and He will give you the better watch every time.

"According to your faith."

PARTIAL DEAFNESS.

A friend of mine, who is partially deaf, told me of an experiment a doctor once tried, to restore his hearing. A liquid preparation was run into his ears, and for a little time he could hear the minor sounds, the singing of birds, the humming of insects, etc. He said he never could express the joy of that short hour, but then the effect of the liquid passed away, and he was deaf again.

I thought of how for years in my Christian life I was partially deaf. In some warm prayer meeting I could hear the sounds that set my heart aglow with pleasure, but the effect was transient. One night I opened my life for the incoming of the Holy Spirit, and He put a drop of Divine ether into my spiritual nature that set the joy bells ringing, and has made me conscious of an undertone of music that I never knew was in life before. The minor sounds, the whisperings of my Beloved as He hides me in the "secret places"—it is indeed blessed.

"Mine ears hast Thou opened," Psalm xl: 6.

ELEVATED OR SURFACE CAR— WHICH?

One day it was my privilege to read the message in the old John Street Business Men's Prayer Meeting. I spoke of the higher life. When the meeting was thrown open for testimony, a dear good brother rose and said, "There are two ways of going to Central Park, more than two, but certainly two: one is the Sixth Avenue Elevated, the other the Eighth Avenue horse car line. The leader seems to be travelling by the Sixth Avenue Elevated, I am going by the horse car line, but I will get there just the same."

A few days after I had occasion to go to a village on Long Island, where I was to speak the following Sunday for a little church. I was to meet a brother, who was to accompany me to the place, at the Flatbush Avenue Station of the Long Island Railroad, at 3.25 P. M.

It was very important that I get that train, so I started early, accompanied by

my daughter. When we had crossed Fulton Ferry, I looked at my watch and found we had over an hour in which to get to the station, so I said to my daughter, "We've plenty of time to get there by the surface road, so we won't climb those high stairs to the elevated road, but take the electric cars." We did, and after going a few blocks, a heavy load of coal blocked our way, delaying us quite a while; then the car ahead of us became stalled, and so it went on, until, fearing we might be late, I looked at my watch, saw there remained only ten minutes to catch the train, with the station about three-fourths of a mile away. "Can you run?" I said to my daughter. She answered in the affirmative, and we started. Well, we did catch the train, passing through the gate just as it was about to be closed, and, tired out, I sank in the seat beside my friend, saying, "I've been running," to which he replied, "You look it." I didn't enjoy the trip much.

On the Monday following, I was in John Street meeting again, and when the

meeting was opened for testimony, I rose, recounted what had been said in the meeting previously referred to, told them my experience in catching the train, and then said, "All who want to may travel the Christian life by surface lines; I choose to go by the elevated. I had a hard struggle to catch my train. I narrowly escaped missing it, and when I finally caught it, was so exhausted that the pleasure of the trip was spoiled."

"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness,"
Isaiah xxxv: 9.

SAILING ALONG THE COAST.

Coming from Portland, Maine, on a steamer one night, we ran into a very severe storm. The waves broke through the sides of the vessel, and washed passengers out of their state rooms, and few on board expected to see land again.

We outrode the storm, and in the morning we asked the captain what he did when the storm came on. He replied, "You know that through the day we were sailing along the Massachusetts coast. When the storm came in its fury, I put the vessel out towards the open sea. It was our only hope of safety. Had we stayed near the coast, we should have been dashed against the rocks."

For years in my Christian experience, I was sailing along the coast. Every storm of temptation dashed me against the rocks and well nigh wrecked me. One night, years ago, I threw out the last bit of cargo that kept me from sailing out into the deep water, and put out for

the open sea. Storms come, as before, but every one dashes me nearer the heart of God.

“Launch out into the deep.”

OCCASIONAL GLIMPSES.

One August day, years ago, I was on the summit of Mt. Washington. I had heard of the wonderful view to be had there, but I found that all about me was thick clouds, and was much disappointed. The wind was blowing, however, and as the clouds were swept past, I looked eagerly for a rift through which I might catch a glimpse of the landscape below. The opportunity came, and for a few minutes I looked upon the most magnificent scene it has ever been my privilege to witness. I saw the Connecticut River from its source to its mouth, with the lovely cities and villages that line its banks; and I remember saying over and over again, "Oh! how grand this is! How grand this is!" But in a very short time the clouds drifted over the scene, shutting out its beauty. Again a break, a few minutes of enjoyment, and then the dull gray of the clouds again; and so it was all the day. Perhaps altogether I had a half hour's enjoyment of the scene.

Coming down the mountain that after-

noon, I heard one of the tourists say he had been on the summit of Mt. Washington all day at one time, and not a cloud had obstructed his view of the valley. I wished I might have ascended some such day as that.

And this all made me think of the different phases of my Christian experience. Time was when I only caught occasional glimpses of the beauty of my Beloved; clouds separated us most of the time. I heard others talk of the constant sunshine, and I wished I might know that experience. I asked God to reveal to me what kept me in the clouds so much of the time, and He showed me plainly that I had not made a complete surrender. I made it one memorable night, the clouds were dispelled, and while I have sometimes been in "heaviness," the clouds have never been so thick as to shut out my Saviour's face, nor to keep me from the vision of His beauty.

"But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii: 18.

HELP YOURSELF TO FRUIT.

I once heard a man tell of walking through the main street of Trenton, N. J., with a friend, when they saw a little boy looking wistfully at the contents of a fruit stand, kept by an Italian. My informant's friend went to the boy and said, "You help yourself to the fruit and I'll pay for what you take." The boy simply looked at the man in astonishment. He repeated the offer, when the boy said, "Oh, no! the Italian would have me arrested." Not wishing to be balked in his charitable intention, the man said to the Italian, "Tell the boy to take fruit; I'll pay you." The Italian, turning to the boy, said, "You help yourself; the man, he pay me."

The boy, thus encouraged, filled his pockets, stuffed the fruit inside his coat, took off his hat and filled that. The man paid the Italian nearly two dollars for what the boy had taken.

How many of us have heard others tell

of feeding on the choice fruits of Canaan and looked wistfully upon the luscious abundance, and yet when urged to partake ourselves we have drawn back like the urchin spoken of, fearing they were not for us. We are so slow to learn that God does not place before us the fruits of the Spirit to taunt us. They are to partake of in abundance and all paid for.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,” etc. “Oh, that My people had hearkened unto Me. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied them,” Psalm lxxxi: 13, 16.

THE "RUBBISH" ROOM.

Under the old Jewish economy, a servant after serving seven years could decide whether to stay in service or go free. If he said, "I love my master; I will not go out free," he was that man's servant forever.

There is a time of decision like this, I think, in the life of every Christian—a time in which we are to say whether or no we are to be entirely the Lord's.

I visited a friend who was building himself a house. He took me through the partially finished rooms, and told me what they were to be used for when finished. "This is the dining room, this the parlor, this my son's room," etc., etc. Coming to a small room on the second floor, he said, "This is the Lord's room—my closet—dedicated to Him, a place where I can come to worship God." He was at the time living very close to Jesus, and I was glad it would be so he could have a room of this kind.

Months after, I visited him again; he was living in the house, now finished. During our conversation in the early part of my visit, he asked me to pray for him, for he felt that he was not living in the "secret place." I promised to do so. In the afternoon, he took me through the house again, that I might see how it looked now that it was finished. As we passed the little room that he said was to be dedicated to God, I pushed the door open and saw that it was filled with pieces of furniture there was no use for in other rooms. No place big enough for one to kneel. Sadly I turned away. Toward evening, we went out for a walk, and during that walk I said to him, "My brother, you asked me to pray for you; I'll do it; but haven't much hope my prayer will be answered until you clean out that room and use it for the purpose you first intended."

"When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it," Deut. xxiii: 21.

PHOTOGRAPHING IN THE DARK.

I was in Philadelphia at the time the G. A. R. were holding their encampment. The city was handsomely decorated, the illumination by electricity being the finest I had ever seen. The City Hall, built as it is across Broad Street, had ropes of electric lights strung from the top of the Penn statue, 547 feet high, to each corner of the building, and shields and flags of different colors ornamented the front and sides. I was much interested in all this, but what interested me even more was an amateur photographer, whose camera stood in the centre of Broad Street, pointing toward the City Hall.

I said to the man, "Do you expect to get a good photograph of the City Hall at night?" "Yes," he said, "I will have to make a long exposure, about twelve minutes, but I'll get a good photo all right." I said, "I can understand how that might be possible, but one thing I can't understand is this—I see men and

women passing and repassing in front of your camera, and with the plate exposed as it is, I should think they would spoil your picture." "They would," he answered, "if it were daylight, but at night, when a long exposure is necessary, the objects that pass and repass quickly leave no impression on the plate."

Standing right there on Broad Street that night, I lifted my heart to God and prayed, "O! Lord, in this night of sin and sorrow, which we call life, keep my eyes fixed on Thee, and may the objects that pass between Thyself and me pass so quickly that they shall leave no impression, but may I have on my heart a photograph of Thee."

"Looking unto Jesus."

MAMMOTH CAVE—STAR CHAMBER.

“Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness,” Psalm cxii: 4.

One February night, years ago, I visited Mammoth Cave. After being shown through a number of very interesting parts of that marvellous cavern, the guide brought us to a section which he said was the most interesting of all—the “Star Chamber.” I looked about me but saw nothing of special interest. The stalagmites and stalactites were not as brilliant as in some other parts, and certainly not as large as they were in “Gothic Chapel,” where they met together in the centre and formed great pillars, and I wondered why he had called this the most interesting part.

It was a larger chamber certainly than any he had yet shown us, being perhaps 150 feet in diameter, with a ceiling over 160 feet high, but I looked in vain for beauty. The guide said to us, after a

little time, "Let me take your light," and we handed him our lanterns. He disappeared with them into one of the side passages with which the cave abounds. We thought he was going to leave us in total darkness, when we heard his voice, sounding at a great distance, "Look up." We looked up, and there through the black gypsum roof of the cave projected crystals and he had concentrated the light of the lanterns and thrown their rays on the ceiling in such a way that they sparkled and glistened like real stars, so much so that the old gentleman who was with me said, "He can't fool me; we are in a part of the cave where there is a hole in the roof, and we are looking out into the clear starlit sky; you know it was a bright starlight night when we came in." I said, "Yes, I might believe that but for the fact that outside it was very cold, the thermometer registering ten degrees above zero, while here it is quite warm, the temperature never varying from sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit." "That's so," he replied; "they are imitation stars.

Isn't it wonderful?" And indeed it was.

Well, now, when he took our lights away, I might have said, "That's a queer way to show us beauty! Generally, when one is anxious to exhibit beautiful things, he turns on the gas or electric lights; this man takes our lights away." But if he had not, we never could have seen the beauties of "Star Chamber," which, indeed, is the most interesting part of Mammoth Cave.

God sometimes takes our lights away: position, reputation, something on which we are setting our affections, and when it seems as though He were going to leave us in total darkness, we hear His voice saying, "Look up," and looking up, we see beauties of His love we never could have known had He not taken our lights away.

"The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him," Ezra viii: 22.

HUDSON RIVER AT NIGHT; OR,
TREASURES OF DARKNESS.Isaiah xlv: 3.

I have sailed up the Hudson River very frequently—have viewed its beautiful scenery at all seasons of the year; have seen the hills and the mountains in the loveliness of their spring dress, also when covered by the many colored autumn foliage. But the one trip that I remember with more pleasure than any other was one I took on a dark night.

The boat leaves New York at six P. M., and I sat on deck while we sailed past the always interesting Palisades, on past Haverstraw, and just as we were about to enter what is probably the most picturesque part of the river, "the Southern Gate of the Highlands," darkness settled down. Rather sadly, I was about to leave the deck and go into the cabin, with the thought half expressed, "There's nothing more to see outside," when there suddenly flashed out a great bar of light

from the search light in the pilot house of the steamer, and with a feeling of pleasant anticipation, I sat down again to enjoy this new delight.

Hither and thither it flashed, revealing the beauties of either shore. Now flooding with light a house on the river bank, or up on the mountain side; now circling with its radiance a boat on the river, lighting up the faces of the crew with greater clearness than the sun. Passing West Point, we heard the shout of a college crew, and immediately the beam of light searched the river until a shell in which the crew sat, with oars erect, stood framed in a circle of light. The whole trip was so enjoyable that I decided when I want to give any of my friends a treat by taking them up the Hudson, I'll not choose a summer day, nor a moonlight night, but the darkest night I can find, and a trip on the steamer *Adirondack*.

And the application. Sometimes in life, when it seems we have come to the end of a pleasant experience, when about us the darkness of failure in temporal

matters is settling, the blessed searchlight of God's love has suddenly flashed out over the gloom, and life has had beauties we had never seen, had the darkness not settled down.

“Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.”

CONSUMPTIVES IN MAMMOTH CAVE.

While going through Mammoth Cave, I noticed ruins of small huts about a mile from the entrance. I inquired of the guide as to what the huts had been used for. He said, "About ten years ago, a number of consumptives had these huts built here, and on their completion occupied them, supposing that, as the temperature was always the same, it would be a good place to recover their health." I said, "Did they find residence here beneficial?" to which he replied, "No. For while the fact that the temperature never varies from sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit, would, everything else being equal, make it a desirable place for them, the fact that light had never penetrated into this gloomy place made it unhealthful as a place to live in; artificial light they had in plenty, but it needs the sun's rays to purify the air."

And I thought, as a Christian, I must

not depend for my health on any man-made lights, but I must live constantly in the presence of the Sun of righteousness.

“He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness.”

“GIVE ME WHAT YOU THINK’S
BEST.”

At one time I was pleading with God for something that to me at least seemed important. I coaxed and coaxed. At night and morning I would urge God to give me just that thing. Soon I was conscious of spiritual leanness. I grew restless, and somewhat disturbed, because God did not give me what I wanted.

While in this frame of mind, I heard a young lady, who is a teacher in a kindergarten, tell of how, the day before, she had gone to her school with some fruit for the children, and of how she put her hands, filled with fruit, behind her and asked two of the girls to choose which hand they would take. One took “left,” the other “right”—one got an orange, the other a banana. Filling her hands again, she went to two little tots, the smallest in her class, and said, with the fruit still hidden, “Which will you take?” when the smallest one said, “Bof

of 'em." The teacher told her that was selfish, and after a little further talk, said again, "Which one will you take?" The little eyes went up to the teacher's face as she answered, "Oo div me the one Oo think's best for me."

Immediately, as I heard this story, there came over my heart the spirit of this little girl, and I said, "Father, never mind about what I choose, you give me what you think's best for me."

"Not my will, but Thine."

“DON'T BEG SO MUCH.”

In the station at Washington, D. C., I was sitting in a train waiting for it to start, when a gentleman, with his wife and child, came into the train. After finding seats for the wife and daughter, the father turned to leave the car, and as he did so, I heard the little girl say, “Now papa, don’t forget what you promised me.” “No, darling, I won’t,” said the father. Outside the car, he came and stood by the window to talk with his dear ones, and the little girl said again, as she saw him there, “Papa, don’t forget your promise,” and he said, “No, I won’t forget.” Again in a few minutes she repeated the words, to which he replied in the same way, and just as the train moved out of the station, the little daughter put her head out of the window and said again, “Now, papa, don’t forget.” The father, this time a little impatiently, I thought, said, “Oh, don’t beg so much; of course, I’ll remember.”

While we are taught importunity in prayer, I wondered if sometimes we did not seem to God to be begging too much for blessings He has promised and will never forget to give. And I believe I was taught a lesson by the Spirit through the conversation I heard that day.

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed,” James i: 16.

A SPEEDY ANSWER.

For years after I had returned to God and had set up the family altar, there was a member of my household who did not join in the family worship and who would not even kneel, until I asked her out of courtesy to the rest, to do that much. This was a sister for whom I had long prayed, but perhaps not so definitely as I should.

One day, a few years ago, I was in a Long Island village one Sunday afternoon, and about twenty of us were joined in prayer in a little church.

All prayed but one, and each asked God for the conversion of some loved one, often mentioning them by name.

I prayed in just these words, "Dear Lord, Thou knowest who is on my heart. I ask Thee that just now while I am praying Thou wilt go to that one and convict her mightily of sin. And now, because I am sure I have met conditions, I *am*

abiding in Thee, and Thy words are abiding in me, and because Thou hast never failed to meet conditions, it must be that the prayer is answered, and I thank Thee for it before rising from my knees."

I reached home the Monday following, went into the parlor, where I saw my sister sitting with her face aglow. She said, "I've got something to tell you," to which I answered, "I thought you would have." She then told me she was converted—of how, sitting in a meeting on Sunday afternoon, with no more thought of being a Christian than she had for years—how all at once an awful conviction of sin came over her, and she felt she must be saved and saved then. She went forward and asked those in charge of the meeting to pray for her, which they did, and she was saved. I said, "What time was it; did you notice?" "Yes," said she; "I chanced to look at the large clock in the room as I went up the aisle, and it was just half past four;" to which I replied, "When I rose from my knees

in Blue Point, L. I., it was just half past four, for I looked at my watch."

"Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend, and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him; and the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said, Thy son liveth," John iv: 53.

A VISIT TO THE U. S. MINT.

A friend of mine received a letter from a friend in San Francisco, telling of his visit to the U. S. Mint in that city. He was acquainted with the cashier of the Assay Office, who invited him to inspect that part of the institution.

After being there for some time viewing almost countless wealth in gold and silver, the visitor remarked to the cashier, "I should think you would be afraid of robbers here; it seems to me it would be a very easy matter for a man to hold a pistol to your head while others would seize the treasure." No sooner had he uttered the words, than a number of uniformed men had their hands on him and he was being roughly hustled out of the place, when the cashier raised his hand as a signal to stop, and said, "That's enough; I only wanted to show him I was amply protected." He had only touched a button, and the guards, who were al-

ways near, though unseen, instantly responded.

When tempted, a signal to the throne will call about the tempted one all the hosts of God.

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.”

“MY MONEY’S NOT IN THAT
BANK.”

One day during the semi-panic of 1893, I brought to my employer an “Extra,” containing an account of the failure of three banks in Kansas City. He said, “That doesn’t effect me; my money isn’t in Kansas City.” The next day I told him of the failure of a bank in Brooklyn. He said, “My money isn’t in that bank.” The next day I came in with the news of the failure of a New York bank. “Is it the Garfield?” he said. I answered, “No;” and he said, “Well, I won’t worry until the bank in which I keep my account fails.”

Soon after this, I was called to pass through a number of trials. One thing after another failed, but I kept on saying, as each crash came, “My money isn’t in that bank, and until the bank fails in which my treasure is, I’ll not fret.”

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom,
neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor

of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii: 17, 18.

“CHECK YOUR BAGGAGE.”

When I first started out with my sample case, as travelling salesman, I used to take the case in the car with me, and almost crowd myself out of the seat to give it room. I've found a better way—I check my baggage, and when I reach a city where I want to use my samples, I hand in my check to the baggage master, and he gives me the case. It's a much better way.

One day I felt I had been carrying a lot of care and trouble around with me, and I remembered I carried about with me a check that read, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” I checked my baggage—remembering that it was good for *all* my care, and knowing I was likely to get more, I kept the check and day by day I check my baggage, and will not give up my check until I get on the other side, and then I guess it will be a case of “lost baggage.”

“I’M AN HEIR TO A LARGE
ESTATE.”

Standing on the platform of a railroad station one day, waiting for a train, I felt a touch on my shoulder, and turned, expecting to see a friend—an acquaintance certainly. To my surprise, I found an entire stranger. He said, “I had a queer experience this morning.” I asked what it was, and he said, “A lawyer met me who told me I was one of the heirs to a large estate now being settled in New York.” And then he went on and told me particulars.

I took the train, and sat there thinking. “Now, that man was so greatly pleased over the fact that he is an heir to an earthly estate that he is going around telling entire strangers, while we, as Christians, many of us, at least, professing to be heirs to an estate of infinitely greater value than any earthly estate can be, yet hesitate not only to tell strangers about it, but our friends.”

Let us tell it. We will find people everywhere anxious to hear. I talk with all classes and conditions of men—with a noted general in the United States Army; with the bootblack who blacks my boots, and everywhere I find men anxious to hear. I talked with my heart all aglow to a saloon keeper in Altoona, Pa., for a half hour, and then said, "I'll have to go now; my train is about due." He grasped my hand warmly, and said, "I wish your train was two hours late."

"Give a portion to seven and also to eight,"
Eccles. xi: 2.

SETTING TRAPS.

"Instant in season and out of season." I have a way of setting what I call my "traps." Travelling as I have for years, I have noticed when one enters a car in every seat of which at least one person is seated, he or she is apt to go along the aisle until a seat is reached in which the occupant has left a clear space. I frequently arrange the space by my side in such a way as to make it look as though any one was welcome to occupy it, then ask God to send some one along to whom I may talk about Jesus. I call it a trap. Evil men set traps, may not God's children do the same?

It might be interesting to tell of many conversations I have had in this way. I will tell of one at least. Coming from Manchester, N. H., to Boston, one day, a gentleman, well dressed and of fine appearance, took the seat by my side. At first I thought it would be hard to approach him, but I find that "out of the

fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh." and I was soon in conversation with him on religious subjects. He told me he had not been to a church for years, and did not know what the inside of a Bible looked like. He told me also of his life, of how he had made his money, and other things he said he never would have mentioned had I not been a stranger and would probably not see him again.

Among other things, he said he "hated hypocrites." I told him I guessed Jesus did not *like* them, although I was sure He loved even them, for He loved all sinners, and loved such men as He had just described himself as being. Then I told him of the woman taken in adultery, whom the Jews took to Jesus, of how the Saviour stooped and wrote on the sand, and how He said, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her." I told him the story word for word, for I knew it that way, and did he listen? Yes, as though his life depended on it. As eagerly as any child ever listened to a fairy story. And when I came to the

words, "Neither do I condemn thee," he said, "Did Jesus say that?" "Yes," I said. And then I told him of how, as a wretched sinner, with no hope in this world or any other, I crept to His dear feet, and heard Him say, 'Neither do I condemn thee.'

He took from his pocket a card, on which was his name and address (which a few minutes before, while telling of his life, he said he would not reveal under any circumstances), and he said, "If you ever come to Boston again, I want you to write me, and I'll come to hear you talk if you talk on Boston Common or in a church. I want to hear more of this wonderful story."

As we parted in the Union Station, he said, "My friend, my life will be different from this day because I met you."

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters,"
Isaiah xxxii: 20.

MISSED THE "EMPIRE STATE."

I have never, but once, knowingly taken my employer's time to tell the story of God's love. Shall I tell you about that?

I was in Utica, N. Y., and had just entered my hotel at noon to get my dinner and take the Empire State Express at 12.55 for Syracuse. As I went into the office of the hotel, a man stepped up to me, and taking my hand, said, "You don't know me?" I said he was right about that, when he replied, "I heard you speak last night, and you made me hungry for God. I wanted to speak to you then, but lacked courage. This morning, while in my store (he was a business man in Utica), I thought I had missed my chance of talking to you, when the superintendent of the mission in which you spoke came in, and I inquired where I might find you. He told me your hotel, and said you were going out on the Empire State; so of course you will have no time to talk to me." The

thought that my time belonged to my employer came to me, and if I missed that express, the next train would bring me to Syracuse too late for business that day. So my first impulse was to say, "I am sorry, but I cannot miss that train." But I said to the man, "Let us talk to Father about this," and standing there, I lifted my heart to God, and He told me clearly to give him as much time as he wanted, and that my employer's interests would be cared for. I said, "We will go up to my room and talk as long as God wants us to." We had an hour and a half there with God, and it was a delight to look on that man's face as he left the room, for he had found peace. I had a letter from him a year later, in which he told me it had been the happiest year of his life.

I ought not to close without saying I was much surprised at the amount of business I did in Syracuse—ten times as much as I had expected.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added," Matt. vi: 33.

HIS FIRST SERMON.

A very dear friend of mine was at one time pastor of a small church in an Illinois town. Among the converts during his ministry was a young man who was very illiterate, but as soon as he was converted, expressed a desire to preach. My friend, knowing he could not put two sentences together properly, tried to discourage him; but he would not be denied, and so my friend said to him one day, "I am going out next Sunday night to hold a meeting in a school house about four miles from here, and you may preach the sermon."

They went; the school house was crowded, and the young man rose to preach. He said, "My text is First Timothy i: 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' " He paused, the congregation expecting him to continue. Again he read his text, this time with a voice trem-

bling with emotion. Another pause, and a longer one—tears streamed down his cheeks as, with choked voice, he again repeated the words of his text, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and bursting into sobs, he sat down. My friend had a sermon all prepared to preach when the young man should break down, as he knew he would, but he forgot all about his sermon as he looked and saw a number of the congregation weeping. He simply said, “All who want to be saved by this Christ who came to save sinners, come forward and kneel.” Seventeen persons were converted that night, and the greatest revival that country had ever known commenced as a result of that young man’s attempt to preach. He could do no more than repeat his text.

“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.”

BUYING UP OPPORTUNITIES.

There are so many ways in which we can approach men. I have spoken to hundreds on trains, in stores and in hotels, and have never met with a single rebuff. I rarely approach two men in the same manner. The Spirit will tell us how if we want to learn. I have never yet approached a man with a question abruptly spoken, such as "Are you saved?" or "Are you a Christian?" but I just enter into conversation and wait for His leading. Sometimes I approach the subject one way and sometimes in another.

One day, coming on the train from Elmira to Binghamton, I "set my trap," and a young man came and sat by my side. I saw his railway ticket read "Waverly, N. Y.," and consulting my time table, saw it was twenty-six minutes to Waverly. Lifting my heart to God, I said, "Lord, I have only twenty-six minutes in which to touch this man's life;

give me the message quickly." I had my railroad ticket in a little Testament that I always carry, and the conductor coming through almost immediately, I held the book toward my companion as I opened it to take out my ticket, and I said, "That's a queer sort of a pocket book for a travelling salesman to have, isn't it?" "Yes," he replied; and I said, "I haven't always carried that kind." He said, "I guess trouble drove you to it." I said, "Yes, it did, and I guess God can't do much with most of us unless He sends trouble." Looking into his face, I saw his eyes were red, as though he had been weeping, and I said, "My friend, what's your trouble going to do for you?" He told me of his trouble; it was indeed sore trouble, and I did not wonder he had been weeping. I asked him if he knew God as a comforter, and he said, "No." For about twenty minutes I had the delightful privilege of pouring into his ear the old, old story—the story that seems "each time I tell it more wonderfully sweet;" and when he left the train at

Waverly, I asked God's blessing upon our meeting, and set my trap for the next one.

"That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," 2 Cor. i: 4.

THE GOLDEN RULE ON FIRST OF APRIL.

On the morning of April 1st some years ago, my nine-year-old daughter, sitting at the breakfast table, said to me, "I'm going to catch a lot of girls to-day; I've studied up a whole lot of tricks; but I hope no one will catch me."

I said, "Don't you remember, darling, what papa told you about the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others,' etc.? And if you don't want them to catch you, ought you to catch them?" That seemed a puzzler to her, and she sat still a minute or so, and then said, "Say, papa, I don't believe Jesus meant the Golden Rule for the 1st day of April."

Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Some Christians seem to take that injunction about as my daughter took the Golden Rule, and say, "I don't believe Paul meant to rejoice when your rent isn't paid and when you are out of a position."

"Rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v: 16.

“THEY’RE ALL MINE.”

They tell a story of Miphradates. He was in the habit of presenting to any one that pleased him in any way a very beautiful horse. Shortly after reaching home, the one who had received this favor would see, tied outside his gate, the present. One day a musician played before him with such skill that he found in addition to the horse a complete attire of fine clothing. Dressing himself with this finery, the musician mounted the horse and rode through the town, shouting at the top of his voice, “They’re all mine! They’re all mine!”

I thought I might have acted something like this one evening last summer. While visiting some relatives in a nearby city, I talked of the joy I had in Christ, of the wealth of love He had poured into my soul, and when a member of the household was about to show me to my room, he said, calling me familiarly by my first name, “Do you know who you have reminded me of to-night?” and con-

tinued, "When I was a boy, I used to visit the lunatic asylum; there was a man there who thought he owned the whole of the United States—he was sure of all that lay South of the Potomac."

The next morning he started to apologize, when I stopped him by begging him not to, as I was glad I had impressed him with the fact that I felt rich. He hath indeed "clothed me with broidered work, and shod me with badger's skin, and girded me about with fine linen, and covered me with silk. He has decked me with ornaments and put bracelets on my wrists and a chain on my neck and a crown on my head."

The house I live in has "foundations of sapphires; windows of agates; gates of carbuncles; all its borders are pleasant stones;" located in a land of waterbrooks, "where fountains spring from valley and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates." I felt like shouting more and more, like this favored one of Miphradates, the king, "They're all mine! They're all mine!"

JESUS A "WAY-SHOWER."

"Jesus a way-shower," say the Christian Scientists. One day in Lawrence, Mass., one of the buyers with whom I have to do, who knew, as all the rest of them do, that I am a Christian, told me he had something better for me.

I asked him what he had, and he said he was interested in Christian Science. I asked him what their doctrine was, and he tried to tell me; but I must confess that his definitions seemed so vague that I knew little more when he finished than when he began.

Standing there, somewhat perplexed, I wondered how I could know of what spirit this, then to me, new doctrine was. I thought a good test would be to ask him what they thought of *Christ*. I did so, and he replied, "We take Him as a 'Way-shower.' " " 'Way-shower?' " I repeated; "that's a new name for Jesus, isn't it? 'Way-shower?' One who shows

the way? Why, He Himself said, '*I am the way.*' "

I repeated the words over and over, and said, "I don't think you have anything better for me. This name you give Him doesn't have the grandeur and fulness in it that those have by which I am accustomed to call Him. 'His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.' It isn't as sweet as 'Lily of the Valley' or 'Rose of Sharon;' it certainly hasn't the strength in it that the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' has, and I don't think I will change what I have for what you offer, for I am afraid of any system of belief that minimizes the character or name of Jesus. For 'He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.' He is 'as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even as a morning without clouds, and as the tender grass springing up by the clear shining after rain.' 'All His garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of ivory palaces.' "

"Some take Him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most,
Sure these have not feelings like me,
So wretched and ruined and lost!
If asked what of Jesus *I* think,
Although my best thoughts are but small,
I say, He's my meat and my drink,
My Saviour from sin and its thrall,
My hope from beginning to end,
My Lord and my life and *my all*."

Riding on a train one gloomy day in winter a short time after my conversation noted above, I sat thinking of what my friend had said; of how he had told me there was no such thing as forgiveness of sin, that no one could pay for another's transgression, and that according to the Christian Scientists' belief, I must work out my salvation, and the thought came to me: What if by some possibility these people are right? No one can pay my debt? My sins cannot be forgiven? Well, I am in an awful condition, then, for I have sinned as few men have, and if they cannot be forgiven, I am undone. My debts have piled mountain high, and every effort to pay them only increases the obligation.

A temporary gloom came over my heart; the day seemed darker; the gloom increased until it was almost a horror, and I leaned my head back on my seat, and closing my eyes, I thought of Calvary. I saw One extended on the cross; I heard Him say, "I was wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquity," and over my disturbed soul came peace.

One Christian Scientist told me, in answer to my question, "Why did Jesus die?" that He died simply to show a little later that He had power to break the bonds of death. His death means more than that to me, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

"He gave His life a ransom for many."

THE WESTERN UNION TIME BALL.

I frequently attend the John Street Noon Day Meeting, and when I go down just a little before twelve, I see men standing along Broadway and on the nearby corners, with their watches in their hands and their eyes upturned all in one direction. I follow the direction of their gaze, and see the "time ball" on the Western Union Telegraph Building. Every day at noon exactly an electric current is sent from Washington, D. C., causing this ball to drop, and these men are waiting that event, in order that they may know whether or not their watches are correct as to time.

I have never seen one of these men looking at his neighbor's watch, to compare his with it; I have never seen them looking, at the noon hour, into the jewelers' windows to learn the time from the clocks there, but every eye is turned

towards that ball on the staff, which always falls at the exact second.

And the lesson is obvious. Don't look at even the best man. We shall never find one who is in perfect time always. Look to Jesus.

Some men are not keeping any sort of time, but are like those dummy clocks in the railroad stations, whose wooden hands are turned to show what time the next train is to start. A friend of mine was in the Flatbush Avenue station a short time since, and saw an old lady eyeing a number of these clocks. After she had finished her inspection, he heard her say, "Well, I declare, there hain't no two of 'em alike, and I don't believe a single one of them is right."

The closest observer of human nature will inevitably reach the same conclusion, "They are none of them right." Jesus is always right, hallelujah!

"That in all things He might have pre-eminence," Col. i: 18.

“I WANT MAMMA!”

When one of my children was about two years old, her mother went out to spend the evening, leaving the little one, asleep, in my charge. In a few minutes she awoke, and not seeing her mother, she began crying for her. “I want mamma, I want mamma.” I tried to quiet her with toys that had at other times amused her, but she would not be silenced. That cry, “I want mamma,” continued until her mother came home, then she nestled down in her arms and went to sleep.

The ambitions of life, the allurements of wealth and position, are oftentimes presented to me, but my heart cries out, “I want Jesus.”

“Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon,” Song of Solomon i: 7.

“THE WATER GETS FRESHER.”

I have had occasion to speak frequently in a little church in Long Island, and at the close of one of the evening services one of my hearers came to me and said, “I can’t understand one thing about your talks—you have spoken here at least forty times, each time about God’s love, and the subject seems new and fresh still. Fresher, indeed, than when I first heard you.” I said in reply, “In the city in which I live the water supplied by the city is not good. Near our house there is a pump, and I have noticed on warm days an almost continuous stream of children going with their vessels to that pump—my children among the rest. The water is always cool and sweet at such times. I said one day, ‘I wonder the woman who owns that pump does not object to so many running to it for water.’ What I heard in reply was this, ‘She said she was glad to have us come and pump as much as we pleased, for the

more water we pumped out, the fresher and sweeter was the water for her own use.' It's that way with God's love, it 'seems each time I tell it more wonderfully sweet.' "

"Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it," Malachi iii: 10.

AFRAID OF HIS FATHER.

Our happiness is added to or detracted from by our differing views of God's character.

When I was a boy, I had for a play-mate a boy whose father was not the kindest man I ever knew. One day I went up to his house to play with him, and when he came out into the yard crying, I said, "What's the matter, Jim?" His answer was, "I wish I was not four years old yet, or over twenty-one." I said, "Why?" His reply was, "If I wasn't four years old, my father wouldn't whip me, and if I was over twenty-one, he wouldn't dare to." His life was filled with misery because he was afraid of his father. Mine was free from this sort of thing, because my father was always kind.

I have known men and women who seemed in constant dread of God, and whose lives were miserable in consequence. He wants us to know Him as

more tender than any earthly father.
Don't be afraid of Father.

"I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee," Isaiah liv: 9.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

“THE HALF HAS NOT BEEN
TOLD.”

My favorite theme is the love of God. Some of my friends have criticised me for giving, they say, undue prominence to this subject, saying that I should sometimes talk of something else.

One Saturday night, in Worcester, Mass., I went out with the Salvation Army and spoke of God's love; on Sunday morning I went out again and spoke on the same subject; in the afternoon I took the same text. In the evening, as I was walking down from my hotel to the barracks, I said to myself, “I'll talk of something else to-night. I have talked three times now on the same subject and on the same street corner. I'll change my subject to-night.”

We gathered round the “penitent form,” as the custom is in the Army, and after a prayer, some one started a chorus, and it was the old familiar one, “The half has never yet been told of love

so full and free," and I said to myself, "Well, if it hasn't half been told, I'll go out and try it once more," and I've been trying ever since to tell of a love that is so deep and high that a life-long ministry could only touch the fringe of it.

"Exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think."

THE ATTIC ROOM.

When a boy, I lived in the country, in a house built (the frame at least) of heavy hewn timber. My sleeping room was the old attic, and I well remember how, on stormy nights, when the wind howled and the storm beat, I'd lie looking up at those old rafters and say, The storm can't hurt me. No storm ever was strong enough to reach me through those great timbers. And I nestled under the great "comfortables" and felt safe and happy. I used to like the rough nights in the old attic.

Since then I have met many a storm in life and have nestled in God's arms and felt safe, and have almost enjoyed the howling of the gale, for I knew that the "eternal God was my refuge."

SNOW ON THE STAIRS.

When a boy I lived in the country. The house in which I lived was rather loosely put together, though made of heavy timber. On winter nights, the snow would sift through the roof and sometimes cover the stairs that led up to my room in the attic.

It was the custom of us children to prepare for bed by the fire down stairs and then run up stairs quickly. In moderate weather we did this, but on cold nights, when the snow was on the stairs, I remember how my father would take me up in his arms, and carrying me up to my room, would tuck me snugly in bed.

God is near us when all is prosperity and when all is sunshine in our lives; but when sorrows and difficulties come, when the "snow is on the stairs," with what peculiar tenderness does He then care for us. How He stoops down and, lifting

us up in His mighty arms, draws us close to His heart of love.

“The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms,” Deut. xxxiii: 27.

EVERLASTING ARMS.

When my children were quite small, on my return from a trip they would climb up into my lap. They would get up somehow, and they knew they were welcome. One would climb over the back of the chair, the smallest would look up into my face and say, "Take me, too, papa."

In talking to young people, I have often urged them to climb up into God's arms, telling them He was ever ready to fold them in His arms and close to His heart. To enforce the truth, I have often used the illustration of my children's climbing into my lap, till one day I read, "*Underneath* are the everlasting arms," and I realized we did not have to climb at all, but just sink down into His dear embrace.

"He shall gather the lambs with His arms and carry them in His bosom," Isaiah xl: 11.

REACHING THE SUMMIT.

One day, while on my vacation in the White Mountains, I started to climb Mt. Jefferson. After a struggle lasting about an hour, I saw above me what I supposed to be the summit of the mountain. I climbed on, reached the point, only to find it was a table land and that beyond and above me was another height. "That surely is the top," I said, and after another hour's toiling, I gained the desired place, only to find myself disappointed again, for reaching out above me was still another height. It was only after hours of weary toiling I finally reached the goal.

Reading the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, I came to the words, "Love is not *easily* provoked," and I climbed toward that height; reaching it I believed when it took a good deal to get me angry. Then I found that in the original no such word as "easily" appeared; and I saw I was only on a table land, with the summit still above me.

Now, shall I *climb* to greater heights, as did those men I saw one very hot August day wearily ascending the six hundred steps to reach the top of the Washington monument, Washington, D. C., or shall I do as I did then, take the elevator and be *carried* to the top?

Shall I say, "We will ride upon the swift," or realizing that "in quietness and confidence" is my strength, shall I not better "mount up with wings as eagles?"

“LET’S NESTLE.”

God wants us to nestle in His love, as a child nestles in the arms of its mother. Zephaniah says, “He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.” What a picture that is.

Once, while on one of my trips through the Eastern States, I stopped at Thomaston, Conn., where my daughter had been spending a long vacation for her health. I entered the room where she was sitting, unannounced, and when she saw me, she ran to me, threw herself in my arms, crying, “Papa! papa!” while tears of joy ran down her face. I held her close, and thought how precious it was to have such a daughter and have her love me so.

Three days after this, I was in New Bedford, Mass. It was a stormy day. I finished business early in the afternoon and went to my hotel room. Kneeling, I lifted my face to Him and said over and over again, “I love Thee! I love Thee!”

and then I said, "Is it anything to Thee, great Master of the universe, that a little one like me comes and tells Thee he loves Thee?" He brought to my mind the meeting with my daughter and said, "Was that anything to you?" And I said, "Anything? Why, it was one of the sweetest experiences of my life," and then He told me that what that had been to me, this was to Him. Then He began telling me of His love to me, until I had to stop talking of mine to Him, and I walked the floor with tears running down my face as I prayed Him to teach me how to tell more sweetly the "wonderful story of love."

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John iii: 1.

"Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known My name," Psalm xci: 14.

THE PERFUMED CORK.

One day a friend of mine, to whom I was talking, took from his vest pocket a cork, such as is used in small bottles, and asked me to smell it. I did, and the most beautiful odor of roses greeted my nostrils. He said, "That cork has not touched liquid for years. Fourteen years ago I was in the perfumery business, as travelling salesman, and I carried a bottle of attar of roses, in which was this cork; I have carried it ever since, changing it from the old to the new suit of clothes as I make the change, and to-day it smells as sweetly of roses as when I first put it in my pocket."

Every time I open the precious Word of God, I get the odor of love—just as sweet now as when the holy men of old wrote those precious verses.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

LOVE CONSTRAINETH.

Riding through Pennsylvania one day, I was thinking whether I had not better talk less of love and more of the terrors of the law, when I heard the brakeman cry, "Next stop, Johnstown." I recalled, of course, immediately the awful flood that a few years before had wrought such devastation in that town, which had since been rebuilt. I said, surely that town ought to be a virtuous one, after such a visitation of judgment and terror. As the train neared the city, I looked out in the fields, and there, on a large advertising board, were the words in large letters, "Buy your whiskies at Jones's distillery, Johnstown, Pa.," and I decided to continue to talk of love.

"The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," Romans ii: 4.

“MAMMA’S HERE, DARLING.”

A man told me once of how his little five-year-old boy asked his mother if he might go out to play in front of the house. She gave her consent, but told him plainly not to go away from the front, not to go up nor down the street.

She watched him, and he had been out only a few minutes when she saw him start to go down the street. Her first impulse was to follow him, then she decided that she would see where the little fellow would go; so slipping out into the street, she followed him at a distance. He first went down the street two or three blocks, then turned a corner, went two or three blocks away, turned down an alley, and then finding that everything looked strange, he stopped. His mother, still unseen by him, drew closer, and just then he realized that he was away from home and didn’t know the way back. Tears began to come in his eyes and he cried out, “I’s e lost, I’s e lost,” when the

mother, right by his side now, clasped him in her arms and said, "No, darling, you're not lost. Mamma's here."

Down through this street and that alley God has followed us when we have wandered away from Him, followed some of us far. Would we had realized sooner that we were lost; but just as soon as we came to ourselves, before our lips had time to frame the words, His loving arms have been about us.

"I am a Shepherd out on the mountain seeking the sheep where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

DRIFTING APART.

I was much impressed, while reading a poem by the late Jean Ingelow, entitled, "Divided." It is a story of two lovers walking through a meadow on a beautiful summer afternoon. They spy a ribbon-like streak of green running through the duller sod about it, and stooping down, they find the lighter green caused by a little stream of water trickling its way across the meadow. Gaily, hand in hand, one on either side the little streamlet, they walk and talk.

The stream widens so that they have to let go of hands, but still chatting, they continue their walk, until they have to call quite loudly as one says to the other, "Come to me now, for the west is burning; come ere it darkens." But the stream is too wide now, and the sad cry comes back, "I may not cross." On and on they go. They cannot speak now, but seeing each other still they go, until the stream, grown deep and wide, so the

ships ride at anchor on its swift tide, and each looks to the other as mere specks in the distance, and finally out of sight altogether, naught remains but the memory of the mute farewell each had waved to the other across the ever widening stream.

As I read it, I thought of how I had wandered in just that way from my Saviour. Neglect of secret prayer and the reading of His Word; it only seemed a ribbon of grass that separated us, then. As near as I can remember, the first outward evidence that I was walking on, separated a little from the Lord, was attending the theatre to see one of the so-called religious plays. Oh! how many are drifting away from God on that line—the “Way Down East,” the “Old Homestead,” “Quo Vadis,” and “Sign of the Cross.” The stream is widening now, and still we can talk across. It’s difficult, now, however. On and on we go, until we find that we are finally out of sight of our Master. But I am glad the illustration does not hold good in its

issue. For over the widest seas Jesus comes walking upon the billows as of old, and restores His wandering child to peace and fellowship. His love spans the great expanse of our sin and disobedience and the moment we call He answers.

“I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for Mine anger is turned away,”
Hosea xiv: 1.

STEAM ENOUGH TO START WITH.

Coming from Buffalo to Elmira one night on the D., L. & W. R. R., I noticed that the only occupant of the car besides myself was the brakeman, and not caring to miss such an opportunity to speak a word in season, I went over and engaged him in conversation.

He told me, as so many have, that the chief reason for his not becoming a Christian was that he was afraid he wouldn't hold out.

I said to him, "Suppose before I got on this train at Buffalo to-night I had gone to the engineer and said to him, 'Have you got steam enough in that boiler to take this train to Elmira?' and when he said, as he certainly would, 'No,' I had said, 'Well, I'll wait right here in the station until I find an engine which has enough steam in the boiler to take me clear through,' would he not have called me silly? Would he not probably

have said, 'You get on the train. We've got enough steam to start with, and will get more on the way down the road.' "

I told him that all he needed to start with was a desire to know Christ. "All the fitness He requires is to feel your need of Him."

"He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."

ON THE WRONG BOAT.

Some years ago I called on a man who had been my companion in sin, and who, after my conversion, told me very emphatically that I must never talk salvation to him. I knew he was not in good health, and so disobeying, or, rather, disregarding his command, I went to see him. I found that he had not changed, except, perhaps, for the worse, and spent about a half hour with him, urging him to accept Christ. I told him how precious He was to me; how He had changed my life and made me glad; but was met with coarse language and vile remarks, that made me shudder.

Near the close of my visit, he said, "You'll have a chance to attend a first class funeral soon, for I don't feel a bit good." I said, "Well, after the funeral, what?" He replied, "Well, I'll take my chances." I said with all the earnestness of which I was capable, "Can't you see you wouldn't be happy in heaven? You have not enjoyed my talk this morn-

ing; I certainly have had a hard struggle to stay and listen to your foul conversation; you would not be happy in heaven; it would be a hell to you, and I should not want to be in a place where for all eternity I might be compelled to listen to talk like I have heard this morning. You know that nothing entereth that city that defileth, and your only hope of cleansing is through the blood of Jesus, which you reject."

Continuing, I told him the following:

One day two excursions were to start from the same dock in Jersey City—one a political association, the other the Sunday schools of a certain district of the city. As the political party were to sail first, their boat was anchored outside of the one that was to carry the Sunday schools, which boat was fastened to the dock and across whose decks the politicians had to pass to reach their vessel.

The political party had started up the river, when a belated politician came running down the dock and boarded the boat on which the Sunday school scholars were. Just then the line was cast off and

away they went. The scholars commenced singing one of the songs they had learned in their schools when the surprised politician asked one of the deck hands what excursion he was on. "The Sunday school excursion," was the reply. "Why," said the politician, "I thought the D—— Association was to sail from the Morris Street Dock this morning." "So they were and so they did," said the deck hand. "They sailed up the river fifteen minutes ago."

The man then asked how far they were going, and finding it was a four hours' sail, went to the captain and offered him fifty dollars if he would put in at some New York City dock and let him get off. "For," said he, "I can't stand this crowd and this singing for four hours."

If he couldn't stand such company four hours, how can one who has never been born from above expect to enjoy the company of the redeemed through countless ages?

"Except ye be converted, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven."

"I CAN'T ANSWER YES."

I read as an item of news in a daily paper, that the Jos. Medill Fresh Air Fund Society of Chicago, were about to take a number of the poor children of Chicago into the country for a two weeks' outing. They could not, of course, take all who wished to go, and desiring to take those who most needed the trip, they sought to discover these by giving each of the boys and girls who came in response to the call a slip of paper, on which were printed questions to be answered with a "Yes," or "No." The following were some of the questions: "Have you ever been in the country?" "Have you ever seen daisies growing in the fields?" etc., etc.

One little girl of about ten years was seen to be crying bitterly. On being asked the cause, she said, with choked voice, "I can't go, for I can't answer 'Yes' to a single question." She thought it was a sort of examination, where she

would have to have a certain per cent. in order to pass. She was quickly informed that she was one who was sure to be taken. She was just the one they were looking for.

And I thought that little girl was in just the condition we all must be in when we come to Jesus for salvation. He asks, "Have you anything to commend yourself?" and until we feel that we are utterly undone and cannot answer "Yes" to any question as to our merit, we are not in a place where He can reach down and save us. But when in despair on account of our utter unworthiness, we creep to His feet, how gladly He saves us.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved," Titus iii: 5.

THE AGNOSTIC'S VOYAGE.

Years ago I read a portion of one of Ingersoll's lectures. It ran something like this, "I am on a voyage; I do not know from what port I sailed, I do not know to what port I am going. I do not know the captain, but I do know some of the crew, and with them I'll have a good time. If the voyage ends in disaster, I go down with the rest. If it ends in some pleasant clime, I'll be there ready to enjoy it with the others."

One day, riding from St. Louis to Terre Haute, I sat in the train with my Bible opened in my lap, and the above extract came into my mind, and a feeling of pity into my heart for this man. I, too, am on a voyage, I thought, and sometimes it seems a stormy one, but I read of One who is "an hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest."

I know my Captain: "He was made perfect through suffering." I know some of the crew, and in fellowship with

them I'll have a better time than the agnostic can possibly have with his surface friendships. Moreover, I know the port to which I am going, for I hear my Captain, who rose victorious over death, saying, "I go to prepare a place for you." I have also stood by the bedside of a departing friend, and heard her say, "It's all blessedness and peace down by the river." Yes, I know the port to which I am going and am surer of reaching it than I am my earthly home in Jersey City when this trip shall have ended, for something may have destroyed that home, but my heavenly "inheritance is undefiled and fadeth not away."

I was sure I did not envy any one who had so many "didn't knows" in such a short description of his belief.

"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

BEYOND THE GATE.

One beautiful summer day I was in a small town on Long Island, where I had gone to speak for a congregation. Between the morning and afternoon services, I walked out through the woods, that I might have a talk with my Father.

I came to a delightful spot and saw, sitting on a rustic bench beside a trout pond, a very old man. The thought came that I could not let an opportunity pass to say a word for the Master, especially as this man must so soon, in all human possibility, go the long journey.

I entered into conversation with him and found that he had been a Christian for forty years, but he said, "I don't want to die." I said, "Do you dread it?" He said, "Well, I wouldn't like to say I dread it, but, then, one cannot know what is beyond this life, you know."

I said, "I don't know that we can know what is beyond, but I am minded to tell you a story I read a short time ago. A

man who was travelling on a fast express train was taken suddenly and seriously ill. The conductor thought it would not be well to take his passenger to the next city his train was scheduled to stop at; so the train was stopped at a small way station, the man was carried into the waiting room, and a physician was summoned.

"When the doctor had restored the man to consciousness, his patient said to him, 'Doctor, I suppose I will die in one of these spells?' 'Quite likely,' said the doctor; 'but you need not dread that, it is simply going beyond the gate.' 'That's what I dread,' replied the man; 'don't you dread it?' 'No,' answered the physician, 'I am a Christian.' 'But,' replied the man, 'You can't know what's beyond, and I should think any man would dread that event.' To which remark the Christian replied, 'My friend, since you have recovered consciousness, you have heard a dog outside the door, scratching and whining to get in, haven't you?' 'Yes,' said the man. 'Well,' con-

tinued the doctor, 'that's my dog. I brought him with me from my home; he has never been inside this station, and he is ignorant of what is in here; but he saw his master enter, and he is anxious to get in. I do not know just what I shall see beyond the gate; but I know my Saviour entered there and is sitting as my advocate and friend, and I am anxious to go through.' "

The old man listened intently to my story, and thanked me for it, saying that death, or what we call death, would look different to him now.

"To die is gain." "To depart and be with Christ is far better," Phil. i: 21, 23.

MAMMOTH CAVE, BOTTOMLESS
PIT.

While visiting Mammoth Cave, the guide took me to the side of the main cavern, and told me to look through a natural window that was formed there, and he would show me the "bottomless pit."

I saw by the feeble light of his lantern a chasm about ten feet wide at the top, and which seemed to grow narrower as it descended. The guide took from a sort of bag he carried with him a piece of paper that had been saturated with coal oil; lighting it, he threw it into the chasm. Down, down it went, and I leaned over to watch it as it descended, until it went out of sight. He then threw a large stone against the opposite side of the gulf. It bounded from side to side as it went down, down; the sound growing fainter and fainter as we strained our ears to listen, but there was no indication that it ever reached the bottom. The guide

told me no one had ever been able to discover the bottom of that awful gulf.

Years ago I read Ingersoll's oration at the grave of his brother. It ran something like this: "Life is a narrow space between the barren peaks of two eternities; our beloved ones go from our ken; we call after them and receive no answer, save the despairing echo of our cry."

I thought as I read it of that night in Mammoth Cave, of my listening at the window to the sound of the stone going down, down into that black gulf, and I felt a pity for this man whose loved one had gone away into the unknown. I thought we all would have the same sad experience were it not for the One who conquered death, and whose resurrection gives us power to say, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory?" And over my heart rolled a wave of thanksgiving to Him who at such times turns our sorrow into hope with the words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

“NEXT STATION HEAVEN.”

Riding on the New York Central R. R. one day, I leaned my head on the cushion of the seat and dozed; but was suddenly awakened by the voice of the brakeman, who shouted, “Next station Utica.” And this thought came, bringing much comfort: “Some day, if the Lord tarry, in the semi-consciousness that precedes death I shall hear the voice of my Beloved saying, ‘Next station Heaven,’ and I shall go to be with Him forever!”

“So shall we ever be with the Lord,”
1 Thess. iv: 17.

“PAPA’S COMING HOME.”

Talking one day with a dear Christian friend on the subject of the Lord’s coming, she said, “I don’t see the use of talking about His coming. I hope to be ready when He comes, but I talk very little about it. I don’t see why we should.” I replied, “When on one of my long trips, I write to my wife saying I will be home the following Saturday, she tells me the children say the first thing in the morning, ‘Papa’s coming home on Saturday,’ and the last thing at night, ‘Papa’s coming home Saturday.’ It isn’t important that they should talk of it, but they do it because they delight to talk and think of my home coming.”

Christians everywhere are talking more and more about His coming, and as I hear them in Manchester and Boston, in Chicago and St. Louis, saying, “Jesus is

coming soon," my heart leaps for joy; I want to see Him—don't you?

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, *comfort one another with these words,*" 1 Thess. xvii: 18.

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